

Message Text

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ACTION NEA-12

INFO OCT-01 AF-10 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-07 H-03 INR-10

L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-10 PA-04 RSC-01 PRS-01 SPC-03 SS-20

USIA-15 ACDA-19 IO-14 OMB-01 AID-20 DRC-01 /155 W

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R 201535Z NOV 73

FM AMEMBASSY TUNIS

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 3728

INFO AMCONSUL ADANA

AMEMBASSY ANKARA

AMCONSUL ISTANBUL

AMCONSUL IZMIR

C O N F I D E N T I A L TUNIS 6476

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, TS, TU

SUBJECT: BOURGUIBA'S SPEECH AND TURKISH-TUNISIAN RELATIONS

REF: ANKARA 8969

1. ON NOV 16 IN HIS WEEKLY HISTORICAL LECTURE, PRESIDENT BOURGUIBA PUBLICLY ADMITTED WITHOUT GIVING DETAILS THAT THERE HAD RECENTLY BEEN A "MALENTENDU" IN TURKO-TUNISIAN RELATIONS. HE ADDED, HOWEVER, HE HAD LEARNED "YESTERDAY THAT THE TURKISH MINISTRY OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS NOW CONSIDERS THAT INCIDENT CLOSED." BOURGUIBA OBSERVED THAT MALENTENDU WAS RESULT OF HIS NOT BEING "COMPLETELY DOCUMENTED" WHEN HE GIVES HIS EXTEMPORANEOUS TALKS. HE CONTINUED BY CITING TUNISIA'S CLOSE RELATIONSHIP WITH TURKEY THROUGHOUT HISTORY AND NOTED TURKEY'S SUPPORT FOR ARAB CAUSE DURING RECENT ARAB-ISRAELI WAR IN BANNING FROM TURKISH AIRSPACE AMERICAN AIRPLANES RESUPPLYING ISRAEL. BOURGUIBA CONCLUDED THAT TUNISIA'S RELATIONS WITH TURKEY THROUGHOUT HISTORY HAD ALWAYS BEEN CORDIAL AND WOULD ALWAYS REMAIN SO.

2. PORTIONS OF BOURGUIBA'S NOV 2 HISTORICAL LECTURE WHICH TROUBLED TURKS DOUBTLESS RELATED TO: (A) SOMEWHAT CRITICAL
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COMMENTS ABOUT ATATURK'S USE OF FORCE TO BRING ABOUT

SECULARIZATION IN TURKEY AND (B) UNFAVORABLE COMPARISON BETWEEN HANNIBAL'S VICTORIES AGAINST THE ROMANS AND ATATURK'S DEFEAT OF A "SMALL" GREEK ARMY. (HANNIBAL IN BOURGUIBA'S MIND IS TUNISIA'S GREAT MILITARY ANCESTOR). OTHER COMMENTS WHICH NO DOUBT MUST HAVE RAISED TURKISH HACKLES CONCERNED THAT ".ASSACRE" OF HALF A MILLION KURDS IN TURKEY AS WELL AS THE CONTINUED CLAIM OF SYRIA TO THE PORT OF ALEXANDRETTA.

3. THE GOT REPORTEDLY SENT A FORMAL NOTE OF APOLOGY TO THE TURKS ON THIS MATTER AND TURKISH AMBASSADOR, WHO WAS RECALLED TO ANKARA AS A RESULT OF THE INCIDENT, IS SCHEDULED TO RETURN TO TUNIS TODAY.

4. COMMENT: ALTHOUGHT "MALENTENDU" WAS SUBJECT OF CONSIDERABLE DISCUSSION WITHIN DIPLOMATIC CORPS, THE INCIDENT DOES NOT APPEAR TO HAVE ATTRACTED MUCH ATTENTION FROM TUNISIANS EVEN THOUGH THEY GENERALLY HARBOR POSITIVE FEELING TOWARDS THE TURKS IN CONTRAST WITH THEIR EASTERN ARAB BRETHREN. WE EXPECT THAT THE MATTER IS NOW A CLOSED CHAPTER AND THAT TURKO-TUNISIAN RELATIONS WILL RESUME THEIR HABITUAL CORDIALITY AND CLOSENESS.
SEELYE

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